

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic write protect apparatus for storage media  
5 comprising:  
at least one record/play element for reading and writing  
information to/from said storage media;  
a pre-existing electronic information signal detection  
element to read information from said storage media;  
10 a record circuit to activate and deactivate said at least one  
record/play element based on a state of a signal from said pre-existing  
information signal detection element.
2. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media  
15 according to claim 1, comprising:  
a plurality of record/play elements.
3. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media  
according to claim 1, wherein:  
20 said at least one record/play element is attached to a  
spinning element.
4. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media  
according to claim 1, wherein:  
25 said at least one record/play element is stationary.
5. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media  
according to claim 3, wherein:  
said pre-existing electronic signal detection element is  
30 attached to said spinning element.

6. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media according to claim 1, wherein:

said storage media is a video tape.

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7. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media according to claim 1, wherein:

said storage media stores digital information.

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8. The electronic write protect apparatus for storage media according to claim 1, wherein:

said pre-existing electronic signal detection element is a record/play element.

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9. An electronic write protect method for a video cassette player comprising:

attempting to record information on a video tape;

detecting a pre-existing video signal from said video tape;

and

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deactivating a record circuit in said video cassette player based on said pre-existing video signal.

10. The electronic write protect method for storage media according to claim 9, wherein:

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said step of attempting to record information is performed by multiple record/play elements.

11. The electronic write protect method for storage media according to claim 9, wherein:

said step of attempting to record information is performed by a spinning element.

12. The electronic write protect method for storage media  
5 according to claim 9, wherein:

said step of attempting to record information is performed by a stationary element.

13. The electronic write protect method for storage media  
10 according to claim 11, wherein:

said step of detecting a pre-existing video signal is performed by said spinning element.

14. The electronic write protect method for storage media  
15 according to claim 9, wherein:

said video tape stores digital information.

15. The electronic write protect method for storage media  
according to claim 9, wherein:

20 said step of detecting a pre-existing video signal is performed by a record/play element.

16. An electronic write protect means for a video cassette player comprising:

25 means for attempting to record information on a video tape;  
means for detecting a pre-existing video signal from said video tape; and

means for deactivating a record circuit in said video cassette player based on said pre-existing video signal.

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